



EPAULET 1968

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Early walking -- sea still ragged --
tasting salt on my lips --
Storm has left the morning fog in swirlings --
Erasing curls across the pine-tops.
This is my first meeting with finality,
and I have lost the will for contention or complaint.
I am almost reconciled and though not going in rage,
I claim the right to one small refusal.
I will go alone, in silence, making no excuses,
but will not blend or harmonize
with this abrupt conclusion.
Later, you will set about to straighten up
this house and day; you will shake the sand
from my shoes and pack them, side by side, away.
Perhaps you will remember my two eyes --
not understanding -- not having seen them --
sombered blue and looking inland.



UNDER THE VOLCANO

Damned djinn in his bottle

Craven Consul wry, too, often dry

Living in Mexico on perpetually sliding slopes
Into valleys of empties, potentials realized but forgotten,
Into the fire of fires to quench a flaming waste.
Caustic chocolates in silvery skins glistened the first indications of
Pream in his coffee, coffee in his liquor, liquors in his cup.

High,
He climbs high into his retort
To ferment with sediment rising, ever so rising, and
Falling
In its own heady vertical tide.
Spewing it out cellular craters secrete enough to seed the rot,
Just enough yeast for the brew,
Just enough to rub in Helen's face, a wife every bit a widow.
Smear the purple tits of asparagus, chewed by a mouth much more
accustomed to the mastication of words;
Serve a liberal lord and princely dominions of tiles and toilets.
And Helen, dear Helen become Indian girls, fairy children,
Ripe for raping.

Crouched beneath his retort,
His apex, droll incense burner
Sponging, sponging
Up the strained mess of sandlewood and cactus.

Flaming vultures hover above a hades of momentary reprieves.
"Te salutamus, te salutamus, righteous avengers,
Salute!
And skoll.
Lethe flows yet.

Consul ascends high,
Aspires to the hades of short heavens
Each the degenerate anodyne of former summits,
Mountaintops orange with setting suns, each

Cinnamon and cloves
Ripe aromas from seeping fragrant places,
Enchantments of the succulent lotus bloom, chewy-luch,
Breath of morn, coo of dove, crushed petals and
Passing curtains of violet seeds.
Vacuums of sparkling shadow flying furious upon the sides,
Mesmeric hums, murmurs, and soft gentle wails of quietness,

Gossamer films in cool wafting breezes, drops of downiest dew on glass,
Sights of curving Minotaurs, golden fleece, griffins, and eucalypti,
New crimson, old caerulean, chimeras of the empire long lost,
Seen not through crystal but sheets of transparent skin, translucent eyes.
Light and lighter still,
Exploding spangles, dazzling flashes blind his eyes in a rain of slivers.
He dropped it.

But ponderous drums soak in the distant rumbling sighs of wrath,
And Consul hails soporific descents into the pollution of once pure cranial waters,
And disassociating tics
And salute to the promises of pouring mescal and absinthe, vitrolic rinsings,
Their proof their proof.

And into the valley of empties.

Rising dry
Fumes from the volcano
Settled
On the night-white blooming cereus
For there are no perennials left.
Only the annuals.

Consul raises palms and corks
Before the eyes he washes with unconfessed adrenalin in so many shots unseen,
Monads of sacchionic current, oral hypodermics;
All his skin lives about his lips.
So many shots were unseen:
Only one was heard round the heart.

WITHIN THE ONYX

Psychodelia's phantom curtain
the apathetic smoke veil
defines this smothering womb
relic-encrusted and jejune:
the padded cell.

This room of subtly contracting walls
with its windowless facade
wraps my arms around myself
shuts my ears to the screams
my eyes to the blood
of the virgin world's ravishment.
You face the eternal winter naked
and I, floating alltoowarm
in the corpse's belly.

Cary Hamilton

we sweat ourselves into caneback chairs
of no particular origin
passing the time hand over hand to the
end of our mindline
subtly resisting the heat's conspiracy
to process us back to the sea

we drip the syrup hour
from inconstant spoons
curiously waiting for it to give up and fall

somewhere between careful straw
jabs at our 65c limeades
and semianxious stares
one of us remarked about how
everyone here at the
corner of Bleeker and Macdougal
was waiting for something
or the other

Ann Chatterton



MEMOIRS OF A DARTMOUTH WEEKEND
or AIN'T WE GOT FUN or GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

BRAND X smiles in misty-blue-black
for hands unreachin' . . . groped
for only night seeing . . . cried
head pounding you don't understand you aren't responding you don't understand
oh but she does can't you see can't you feel
the pounding the pounding — easy
you know BIG CHIEF FLARING NOSTRILS this is really . . . uh . . . nice
impressed yes she was
let us go then you and I isopropally cliched
cum it avec it

BRAND X anxious
thinks of God love bed-couches
the hollow stomach pit is all
BIG CHIEF wake up
throat tightening
has this happened before BRAND X yes . . . yes
does it still hurt BRAND X yes . . . yes it does
its summer you know

touch her please
answer her please
look at her
BIG CHIEF FLARING NOSTRILS
your laugh is fatal
sleep finally
head-shaking semi-nightmares

BRAND X dons morning-mask
all is cheerio
there they are BRAND X and BIG CHIEF FLARING NOSTRILS
with it — confident
happy — no
making motions and emotions
hot road hot sun cool water warm bodies nice smile
BRAND X perhaps oh god yes perhaps a change is gonna come
but
her Big Chief on a foggy windshield makes the dread initial
with an
INDEX finger

BRAND X sneezes laughs coughs dies again
too much head christ do you want to belch all night?
whining screeching cliched psychedelia

lights

tears! oh come now at least pretend – can't
you pretend – CAN'T YOU –

who is this attempting an Ivy bellyrub
where is BIG CHIEF giggle
BRAND X offended? BIG CHIEF your tongue
is stuck to your cheek
outside returning ashes to ashes
wading in cool deep puddle
damp grass
wet ground soft underfoot

bellows the BIG CHIEF
her mind leaps arms open
body forcing rigid cool
the game – the damned game
scream your anguish while your mind shatters into
laughter
is BIG CHIEF asleep

no the game the game the game
makes the stomach pit the lead end
not again PLEASE

running in the fog
calling for a dog
entering weepy
the other chief awaiting commencement of tribal rites
groans what-the-hell
BRAND X smiles
a cricket long mute makes his death call
she fades into chamber untrue to form
no words
no bodies
is this the year of our Lord 1967?
deja vue be true
BRAND X tries god knows she tries
BIG CHIEF FLARING NOSTRILS spews black words
dot dot dot
last morning due
grateful

Anonymous



We knew that not again could we so simply love
When time had moved into itself between us
And we for want of love became lovers
In the grasses of day and the darkly washed nites.
I wear beads now, amber across my neck
A false sunlight strung too round on me
And you I know are typing letters.
Never since have I regretted the coming of sleep
Stepped with its every step to keep the distance
For now the dreams suffice, and I tire quickly—
Say to you that we are growing bigger
For want of being small and lost together.
We knew that not again would we so wholly ache
Who bruised each other through the sleepless years
As we were only firsts of many firsts
Who'd wash our bodies and simply let it pass.

Linda Burton

SUSAN FORBES
First Prize
Poetry

IN THE GLASS DUST AROUND AMSTERDAM

It was in the austere mansions
of his geometric temple
that i first encountered Spinoza,
more intimately known as Baruch.
He looked like a little Jew – or
how an old Mort Sahl might look
had he a tufted beard and eyeglass—
that ground lens all the day
in his cellar (which in fact
he ground and polished
without even a country
beneath his necessarily-connected feet.)

“It was determined”, he said,
“by those immutable laws”
and so the lens-grinder and i
had a mildewed affair
in the glass dust around Amsterdam
that lasted for nearly three weeks
till it aggravated his condition
so that the poor man was driven
to choose between me
and polishing the more prominent lenses
of the synagogue on the corner.
But i would have left him anyway — —
when i remember how in ancient rooms
love was made like Euclidean
geometry, Holland
kisses constructed by pure thought.
Oh how he hated my imagination.

We move through the room, fumbling
walls and cigarettes.

You, shoeless fixer of the darkness,
closing the windows, shutting
the doors, now
unfix

those beads
skimming my breasts
like electric jimmies.

Strandlessly,
ochre cats-eyes skip
sideways
across the sheets, marbling
pink and orange upon the rug.
As if thrown by some small boy,
knocking together,
knocking together,
knocking together.

IF TRUTH IS RETURNING

Your body, exhausted with possibilities
Against my body, arched and fearful
Speaks of strengths.

there is no truth in beginnings
again i could begin

We are drunk on the absinthe of words
But still my arms lie sober
In an area restricted to the single movement of a single form.
Against me all but the shape of you is absent.
My body would, pushing back the present
Then change the temporal pace
Return, forgive, and move you first to my side.
My body, arched and fearful
Against your body, strong and easy,
. . . Holds.

Linda Burton

joe joe with the beautiful fair skin
no one gave you the directions
to our particular
chemin de feu
or so someone told me

what the hell I cry
explicitly
will you please

who could ever tell
gentle of all
that my fast was excellent
to your hunger
or who could ever tell
the morning sickness of a
thing

unevenly wrought

Ann Chatterton



IN SHORT PUMP

In Short Pump
A mere two thousand miles from Venice
And only twenty miles from Richmond, they drink
From cups of dogwood hearts.

Long wicker flyswatters
Ruffle bees and wide June bugs --
Lady, Lady,
Fly away home.
Your house is on fire, your children will burn
And the flies are on your pies.

They sit on barrels plane marked,
And forget pink neon price tags glow in the dark.
To market, to market, to buy a fat pig.
"Why buy pickles when you've got watermelon rind?"
And save the seeds.
Spindles and hoes.

That old whetting stone
Of the same stuff as the footwarmer
Sings like the mill wheel
Buckets spinning up the river
and the spray tides,
Fumes floating to Venice
Two thousand miles away.

Linda Powers

and let's pretend you and I that I know how to curtsy

ABOUT DYING THEY WERE NEVER RIGHT

Floods there used to be
And still are
Bodies in tragic repose
And an Ophelia in her own flood.
There is a purpose for some
Those with hindsight seeing
That there would not have been enough room
Otherwise
Not quite enough air for all to breathe
Or better still that they died without that fear
That greatest terror — how they might have done it wrong
And only the loving living
Remain to know they've done it wrong
Not quite enough flowers sent
And too many memories

but what about ophelia
past the quietest of ferns
in her loveliest of dresses floating

Linda Burton



Moonlight into hazings—
Last hour before sun.
Nightlings fled
Except dew-bead wearers
Lingering with danger
Among the grass.

Spidery morning-breakers—
Mindful as arrows—
Scattering moon babies
Everywhere.

Christine B. Cole

transworld butterfly blues

I am standing here with ossification of the eyeball wondering its not too much worth it after all deliberately trying to inhale to impress the red lady across from me with the tendered hardness of my sweet twentyone years I hold her prize and can glint two through darkly colored glasses only she can't see my eyes and I bet lady that you're dying through them my mouth imitates a parabolic nuisance just begging to stare at anything from coke machine to curtain puller

I play the role being the one always waiting because I'm too tired to do anything else

every time nuns walk by I get nervous in their starch they condemn their faces without ten tons of eyeshadow and I'm sure they wonder at my almost illicitly spread legs as they cluster by I wonder how in the world they get the money to travel being vowed to poverty and all because they always are, traveling, that is, and settle on the fact that if God wants, you've got a special in with the bishop —a preordination of preference more or less

'cause I'm stuck here to the ground

and wish I too could settle out into a group preferred there's always the waddly one who moves with genuine fluster guarding her lambkins of a novice who always seems to be holding back from the sister the world and her habit as she sucks her skin into herself—the Laurel and Hardy of the tragiconvent maybe it's a plot on the part of the pope to spread the image and I see training sessions in skin-sucking-in whirling through my mind

some you have to watch twice because they escaped the habit —by their faces ye shall know them —and some never made it to the habit but you know them even better and because the lady in red is staring a little too hard I lifted myself awkwardly to standing and hoped that she saw me twitch my nose ever so lightly in disgust to prove that I was not too pleased but, still and ever, above all, a lady

I bought six postcards in technicolor addressed them to myself with an appropriate greeting on each and threw them into a cubicle marked MAIL without stamps to test the efficiency of the postal system and slide in lonely half steps away and around, from Hertz counter to baggage wheel, stubbornly refusing to back away from anyone but at the point of imminent contact, stop suddenly and tie my sandal again, feeling confined pleasure as my hair falls into my eyes and spiders out their legs

and then a face so familiar floats above me walking briefly from wing to wing on a red carpet moat bridge and before I can shout out he turns and proves to me by a half smile that no, it wasn't him

the magnificent surge crashed and draws back and I have to laugh at myself for the pain of it all my body has to adjust to feeling normal again, packing up the adrenalin in melancholy bags that necessarily have been everywhere and move on impulsively circling itself

the tininess of stifling afternoon when everyone clings to seats and beds and smoked thoughts, slaking restless bodies with the water of six o'clock and sun-dying when everyone wants to be home from school again

and so I sat playing carefully with one red matchbook, striking each match slowly across the black and holding it until the flame crept onto my fingertips
dropping suddenly to the ashtray and igniting putridity of filters each match cremating its brother and on till there was none and oncebefore deathknelled over my thoughts

we simultaneously made the fire in that night, one two one two one two in downed darkness and I softly relaxed against his legs when spiders crept over my eyes until I thought screaming was the only thing demanded his hands groping for agains and agains

well now just wait

the baby beside me cooed abruptly and threw up and smiled his mother was casual about the odor, wiped him off and tweaked his pinked legs I think about the goodness of it all she of curdled milk and I of ashes she of lovely lines and stray hair halo me of a slightly perspiring upper lip and pulled back hair and smooth o so smooth in my sweet twentyone years

and I turned around my colleged ring in pure imitation of her shake out my hair and cover over a part of the ugliness and she lifts the baby and becomes again part of it and he appreciates, dripping more curdlings over her dress but then she and he laugh in wonder and I remember almost drowning in the night smells and she completed and me with the burned match brothers

but wait

him in grandeur and the first day we met the first flower the first smile

and I testify carefully before a court of unequalled, predelicted mindjustice adding it all together and especially fixing into my mind one scream because it was my ace in the hand trumpeted violently by the slap of nothing

in the bathroom fixing, combing, replacing I decide to do my roots again and unfasten one more button and hustle past two bodies on a quick-turning heel into my cell and I will write my name here and link it with red-lipsticked question marks so that revulsion of one so young will follow each time someone looks at me

there on the grey door

right beneath a coat hook

I cry for love and wait

for a proper amount of time

under the coat hook

is that all he said to me

that night?

when he took my coat and let it go loosely to the couch

he spoke with a certain degree of anguish in careful mixing of metaphor and drink I recall exactly the molasses rummed drinks with amber glints in my hand always, the ice tittering against the glass as I quietly vented fear and the ovoid gloom before my eyes with the glass to my nose there was no time for tears and the usual tricks to parry and thrust the evening away so I told him of my day and how I learned to make bread and wouldn't he like some and he in control undercurrented with his eyes and I spoke endlessly of anything with growing verbal frenzy in the dentist-waiting-room limbo

trying to build ladders of words

and after three-and-one-half offerings his hand drew judgement as it skimmed slightly my head, shoulder . . .

from the wide spread of glassy wings I watch the sun, a reddened communion held upon the chalice of horizon by cloud fingers remembering Stephen Crane and his immortal words on the subject cancelling self-congratulations

I was born to be trite

I fear

but cliched fear is the expected response

and I'm cliched here to the ground as his plane sweeps across the sky and sucks itself in

and before running to his arms awaiting I scribble forgive me on a piece of paper and tear it up knowing that the nuns will find it and shriek about the mess that these dumb people are always making of public places

Anonymous

